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More bus cuts means \$251K in savings for school district

Manteca Unified School District will once again turn to home-to-school transportation as a cost-cutting move for the upcoming year.

Trustees unanimously approved an adjusted bus plan for the 2010-11 school year last Monday.

The move could equal \$251,000 in savings.

Superintendent Jason Messer credited Jason Osborn, director of transportation, for tweaking the current plan in place.

"He tightened up what we have right now," Messer said.

Included is the "no bus zone," calling for kindergarten-through-eighth-grade youngsters residing within a 1.25-mile radius of the campus, and ninth-through-12th-grade students living inside 2.5 miles, to walk or provide their own means of getting to and from school.

Savings under this plan for 2009-2010 was estimated at \$300,000.

The adjusted plan consists of the following:

- Lathrop High transition – The school will finally become a comprehensive secondary site in 2010-2011. With that, the district will no longer need the three buses going to Sierra High and the other going to Weston Ranch High. Estimated savings come to \$35,000.
- No "bus zone" for French Camp School – Since moving out of program improvement status, French Camp can now be placed under the same standards as that of the other elementary sites in the district. No buses could mean \$25,000 in savings.
- High school route efficiency – Several routes for Sierra, Manteca High, and East Union are running well below capacity, with the district opting to combine some routes while re-routing others in hopes to provide a more efficient operation. Saving could come to \$20,000.
- Regional Occupational Program – Discontinuing the ROP bus services shuttling students from Manteca High and Calla High to the Lindbergh Educational Center could amount to \$15,000 in savings.
- Eliminate 2004 bus lease payment – Two buses were purchased using a 5-year lease plan, with the last of the payments coming in 2009. Savings will be about \$56,000.

- Elimination of Spectrum bus service – in 2009-2010, this transportation service was provided for special education students attending programs at Spectrum Center in Pittsburg, CA. The service will no longer be needed as the youngster has moved out of the district, thus, saving the district \$100,000.

The adjusted bus plan coupled with scaling down of the adult education program (minus-\$721,265) will be among the two big cost-cutting items listed on next year's budget, according to Messer.

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